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plug-in

<tool> A file containing data used to alter, enhance, or extend the operation of a parent application program. One of the first uses of this term was in Silicon Beach's SuperPaint application (late 1980s?) for the Macintosh. It had a Plug-ins folder containing different tools and effects.

The Netscape Navigator World-Wide Web browser supports plug-ins which display or interpret a particular file format or protocol such as Shockwave, RealAudio, Adobe Systems, Inc. PDF, Corel CMX (vector graphics). The file to be displayed is included in a web page using an EMBED HTML tag.

Plug-ins, both commercially and indepently authored, can usually be downloaded for free and are stored locally. Plug-ins come in different versions specific to particular operating systems (Microsoft Windows 3.1, 3.2, and Macintosh are available).

Compare applet.

Plug-in Plaza.

PC Mag Plug-ins.

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